THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

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IPL UNDER COVID SCARE

A raft of Covid-19 positives dampened the build-up to the next edition of the IPL, scheduled to begin on April 9. Here's a look at developments

- Axar Patel becomes second IPL player after Nitish Rana to test positive. Rana started training again on Saturday
- More than 15 others, including six event management officials, also test positive
- Organisers bringing in different set of ground staff to tend to Wankhede Stadium after they also test positive
- Reports suggest Hyderabad kept as a back-up option to shift games but Mumbai to remain venue as of now | **PTI, 13**

Frontliner window closed

Centre on Saturday said no fresh registration of frontliners will be allowed to prevent the misuse of provisions by ineligible people to jump the queue

SHARP SPIKE

89,129 cases recorded on Saturday

714 fatalities, the highest in over six months

47,913 cases reported from Maharashtra, followed by Karnataka and Chhattisgarh (4,174)

The last time such a high spike was reported was on September 20, 2020, when **92,605** infections were recorded in 24 hours

50% CASES IN 10 DISTS

6,58,909 active cases on Saturday (**5.32%** of total infections)

10 DISTRICTS: Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur, Thane, Nashik, Bengaluru Urban, Aurangabad, Delhi, Ahmednagar and Nanded (50% of the total active caseload in the country)

PROBLEM STATES

Maharashtra has shown a nine-fold jump in the number of active cases in the past two months

In percentage terms, Punjab has reported the maximum increase in active cases

Five states – Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, K'taka and Chhattisgarh – together account for **77.3%** of the total active cases

24,69,59,192

SAMPLES TESTED FOR COVID-19 UP TO APRIL 2

EIGHT STATES

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh account for **81.42%** of single-day infections

ANNOUNCEMENT

The cover price of The New Sunday Express has been revised to ₹12 with effect from April 04, 2021.
– Editor

EXPRESS READ

Jailed professor Saibaba sacked

New Delhi: Delhi University's Ram Lal Anand College has terminated the service of Assistant Professor G N Saibaba, who is currently serving life term in Nagpur Central Prison for alleged Maoist links. Terming the latest development as a "witch hunt", Saibaba's wife Vasantha alleged that it was a "violation of employee's rights" and that she will move court.

Govt climbs down on movie hall curbs

50 pc seating will now be enforced from April 7; move comes after film industry representatives meet CM

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

A day after it announced stringent measures to tackle the spread of the coronavirus, the State Government modified its order on 50 per cent seating capacity in cinema halls, coming under pressure from the film industry. Cinema halls can now have full seating capacity till April 6.

"Under Clause 10 of the order, seating in cinema halls was restricted to a maximum of 50 per cent of the capacity. The Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce has made a request to the CM to allow cinema halls to run at full capacity as advance online bookings have been made and due to non-receipt of advance notice. It is now decided that the restriction will be made applicable with effect from April 7, 2021," a fresh order from Chief Secretary P Ravi Kumar said.

Just a few hours before Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa did a U-turn, Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar had insisted that the government was firm on its Covid-19 guidelines issued on Friday and that there won't be any relaxation even if there is pressure from any sector.

However, actor Puneeth Rajkumar, whose big budget movie *Yuvarathna* saw a grand release on Thursday, along with members of the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce met the CM on Saturday evening and requested him to revoke the order, citing pre-bookings for movies that were released on Thursday. P5

State Government's U-turns in the past

APRIL 2020: Allowed two-wheelers and opening of IT-BT offices with one-third workforce, but withdrew the relaxations following criticism from health experts

NOV 2020: Banned crackers for Deepavali, but revoked it later, allowing only green firecrackers

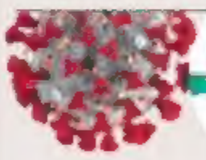
DEC 2020: Announced night curfew, but withdrew the order six hours before it was to be imposed

BATTLING THE SECOND WAVE

4,373 CASES REPORTED IN THE STATE ON SATURDAY

TOP THREE DISTRICTS WITH THE MOST CASES

3,002 BENGALURU URBAN
172 BIDAR
171 MYSURU



>3.53% Positivity Rate

1,23,830 Samples tested on Saturday

41,73,573 Total vaccinations achieved so far

EVEN AS CORNAVIRUS BITES, FEWER PEOPLE GO FOR THE VACCINE

Even as Covid-19 cases continue to alarmingly rise in the state, the number of people coming foward to get vaccinated is comparatively low. According to Dr V Ravi, former head of Neurovirology, NIMHANS, and member of Karnataka Covid Task Force, only about 70 per cent of the vaccine stock allocated to Karnataka is being used daily on an average. P3

HATHRAS PLOT

CHARGE-SHEET FILED AGAINST 8 PFI MEMBERS

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh police on Saturday filed a 5,000-page charge-sheet against eight members of Popular Front of India (PFI) in the Mathura additional district judge and sessions court on Saturday. The court has posted the matter for next hearing on May 1.

Those named in the charge-sheet include journalist Siddique Kappan, Atiqur Rehman, Rauf Sharif, Mohammad Danish, Alam, Masood Ahmad, Feroz Khan and Asad Badruddin. All the accused were charged with receiving ₹80 lakh from financial institutions in Muscat and Doha for fomenting unrest in UP. The STF had arrested five PFI members, including Kappan, in Mathura on October 5, 2020, while they were on the way to Hathras allegedly to meet the family of a Dalit girl who was gangraped. The FIR against them said they were going to Hathras with an intention "to breach the peace" as part of a "conspiracy". CONTINUED ON: P10

Maoists kill five jawans in ambush

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Raipur

A fierce gun battle between ambushed security forces and Maoists left at least five personnel and two rebels dead in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday. Around a dozen personnel were reported injured.

Reinforcements were rushed to the scene of action, but the security forces were yet to return from the operation, Director General of Police D M Awasthi stated. CONTINUED ON: P10

Drunk man sets house on fire, kills 6

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madikeri

Six people, including four children, were burnt alive in their sleep by a family member at Mugutageri village in Ponnampet taluk of Kodagu district in the early hours on Saturday. Two others were injured and are being treated at hospitals in Madikeri and Mysuru. The accused Yeravara Boja (50), however, is absconding.

Boja, an estate labourer staying at the workers' quarters (line house) in a private estate at Mugutageri, used to have frequent fights with his wife Babi. Miffed, Babi moved to her brother Manju's quarters in the same village about a week ago and is said to have ignored all phone calls from Boja. P7

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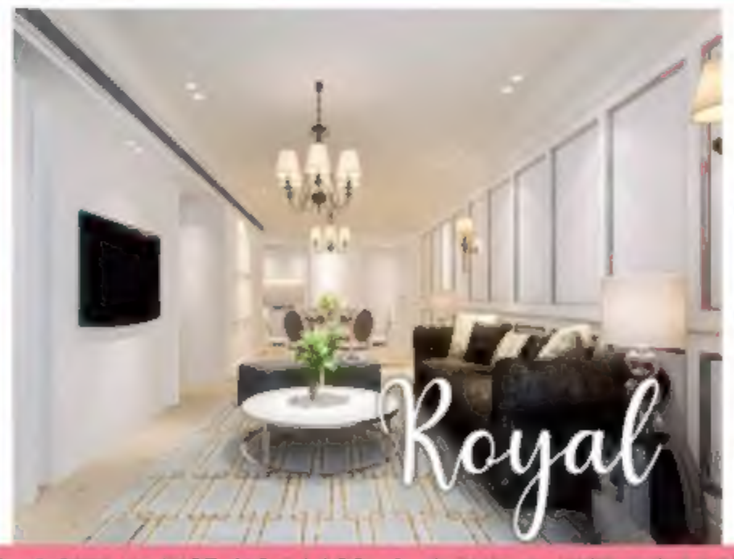

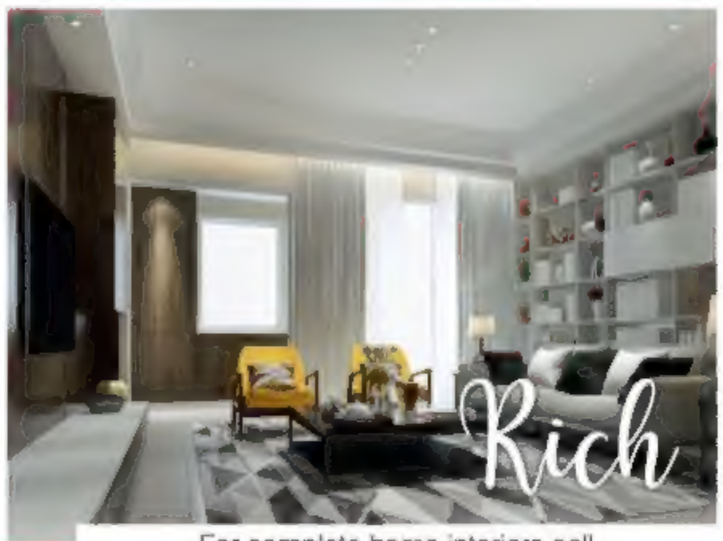

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